

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is requested to re-confirm receipt of applicant's certified priority documents. Such was acknowledged in the Notice of Acceptance mailed 03/03/2006 -- but the relevant Section 12 of the last Office Action Summary sheet was not completed.

In response to the Examiner's suggestions, the form of the specification and claims have been amended so as to obviate all outstanding issues related to form.

Original independent method claims 12 and 31 have been merged to form a single new independent method claim 38. Similarly, original independent apparatus claims 1 and 22 have been merged to form a single new independent apparatus claim 49.

New claim 39 comprises the steps in the "updating phase" of originally-filed claim 12.

New claims 40-42 correspond to original claims 18, 19 and 20, which related to steps in the "updating phase" of originally-filed claim 12.

New claims 43-48 correspond to original claims 13 to 17 and 21, which related to steps in the originally-filed claim 12.

Original claims 32 to 37 have become redundant in the light of the merging of the independent method claims.

The rejection of claims 1-4, 6, 9-13, 15, 18-24, 26, 28-31, 33 and 35-37 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by Fables '406 is respectfully traversed.

It will be appreciated that originally-filed independent method claim 12 related to a two-stage process whereby a user profile was created (during a "learning phase") and then updated (during an "updating phase"). It will also be appreciated that originally-filed independent method claim 31 related to a method for improving database searching using *"a user profile means arranged to provide data indicative of relatedness criteria between keywords from a set of documents"*. New claim 38 relates to *"A method for improving database searching..."*, but unlike originally-filed independent method claim 31, it is restricted to improving database searching **using a user profile created in accordance with originally-filed independent method claim 12**, the steps of which are now specifically set out in claim 38. It thus relates more specifically to the method explained in the originally-filed specification from page 9, line 17 to page 11, line 10, with reference to figures 2, 3 and 4.

Similarly, new independent apparatus claim 49, like originally-filed independent apparatus claim 22, relates to *"An apparatus for improving database searching..."*, but unlike originally-filed independent apparatus claim 22, is now restricted to an apparatus **also having the learning phase features of originally-filed independent apparatus claim 1**, the features of which are now specifically set out.

With reference to Fables", it will be noted that the presently claimed invention allows automation of the identification of "related keywords" and "potentially related keywords", the latter being identified by accessing the user profile and identifying them therefrom for each search keyword. While a user profile is filled with related keywords in

both the present invention and Fables, the present invention involves discovery of those keywords automatically whereas Fables appears to be using manually pre-defined lists (see paragraph 51 relating to "Site Word Maps 2"). Embodiments of the present invention are able to achieve automation associating the SOM algorithm for example to compile lists of related keywords. More generally, the present invention is capable of creating, and optionally updating, a user profile without requiring human intervention (although editing may be possible) that can be used in improving any search queries to extract data from any database to which an appropriate search engine is operatively linked.

It will be noted that the user-specific refinement achievable by means of the present invention happens prior to submission of the search query in question to a search engine (the final step of claim 38), and involves possible refinement of the search query itself, but this may be achieved without requiring users to provide individually-entered preferences or personal data. It will be noted that the penultimate steps of independent claims 38 and 49 in fact correspond to the penultimate steps of originally-filed independent claims 22 and 31 ("means arranged to incorporate..." and "in the event...").

As explained in the paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3 of the specification, a problem of many prior art processes relates to requiring feedback from users. It has been found that in practice, regardless of how valuable it may be to their future use of a search system, users are generally reluctant to provide feedback if it involves interaction with the system before using it or after it has returned results. This is generally perceived by users as an annoyance rather than a benefit. Due to the order in which the present

invention creates a user profile (without relying on individually-entered preferences or personal data), then offers the user suggestions for adapting or improving a search query, prior to submitting the search query, based on a user profile already set up for that user but again without requiring users to provide individually-entered preferences or personal data, the present invention offers users opportunities to improve their database searching without causing either of the types of annoyance explained above.

The rejection of claims 5, 14, 25 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Fables in view of Choi ‘793 is also respectfully traversed.

Fundamental deficiencies of Fables with respect to applicant’s newly presented claims have already been noted above. Choi does not supply those deficiencies. Accordingly, it is not believed necessary at this time to detail the additional deficiencies of this allegedly “obvious” combination of references with respect to other features of the rejected claims.

The rejection of claims 5, 25 and 32 on the same rationale as claim 14 is also respectfully traversed -- for the same reasons.

The rejection of claims 7-8, 16-17, 27 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Fables in view of Kawasaki ‘375 is also respectfully traversed.

Once again, fundamental deficiencies of Fables have already been noted above with respect to applicant’s newly presented claims. Kawasaki does not supply those deficiencies.

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Appl. No. 10/543,096
July 9, 2007

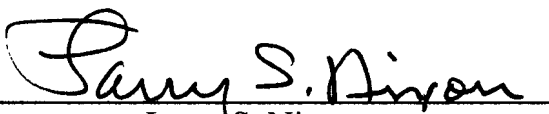
Accordingly, it is not believed necessary at this time to detail the additional deficiencies of this allegedly "obvious" combination of references with respect to other features of the rejected claims.

The rejection of claims 7-8, 17, 27 and 34 for the same rationale as claim 16 is, of course, also traversed for the same reasons.

Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in allowable condition and a formal Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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